



Guinea: Background and Relations with the United States

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Summary

Guinea is a former French colony on West Africa's Atlantic coast, with a population of about 10 million. It is rich in natural resources but characterized by widespread poverty and limited socioeconomic development. While Guinea has experienced regular episodes of internal political turmoil, it was considered a locus of relative stability during much of the past two decades, a period during which each of its six neighbors suffered one or more armed internal conflicts. At the same time, democratic progress was limited, while popular discontent with the government rose along with instability within the sizable armed forces.

The past two years have seen a series of deep changes in Guinea's political landscape, a new experience for a country that had only two presidents in the first fifty years after independence in 1958. On June 27, 2010, Guineans voted in the country's first presidential election organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. A run-off vote between two front-runner candidates is slated for early August, after being briefly postponed as a result of legal challenges to the first-round results. The presidential election is expected to bring an end to a military-led transitional government, formed in early 2010, which in turn succeeded a military junta that seized power in December 2008 upon the death of longtime president Lansana Conté. The junta dissolved the constitution and legislature, appointed a civilian prime minister, and promised to hold presidential and legislative elections. Elections were repeatedly postponed, however. On September 28, 2009, Guinean security forces opened fire on thousands of civilian protesters in the capital, Conakry, killing at least 150 and wounding many more.

On December 3, 2009, junta leader Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara was evacuated from the country after he was shot and wounded by his chief bodyguard. Dadis Camara's exit paved the way for the formation of the transitional government, which is headed by Gen. Sekouba Konaté, a senior junta official. A longtime opposition leader, Jean-Marie Doré, serves as prime minister.

The United States suspended some development aid and all security assistance to Guinea in the wake of the 2008 coup. Neither U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) governance and humanitarian assistance programs, which comprised a substantial portion of the U.S. aid budget in Guinea before the coup, nor U.S. contributions toward Guinea's electoral process were affected by the suspension. In response to the military crackdown on opposition supporters in September 2009, the United States called for Dadis Camara to step down and announced targeted travel restrictions against CNDD members and selected associates. However, some restrictions on security assistance were rolled back during the transitional government, and bilateral aid is expected to increase if the transition to elected government is completed.

Related legislation during the 111th Congress includes H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen) and S.Res. 345 (Boxer). This report focuses on recent events, U.S.-Guinea bilateral relations, and U.S. policy and assistance. It also provides background on Guinean history and politics. For further analysis of recent events, see CRS Report R41200, *Guinea's New Transitional Government: Emerging Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff.

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Recent Developments

On June 27, 2010, Guineans went to the polls to select from among 24 presidential candidates. None reached the threshold required for an outright win, necessitating a run-off vote between the two leading candidates. The vote was historically significant, the first national election in Guinea's history organized by an independent commission and without an incumbent candidate. The second round poll is expected to be held in early August. Campaigning was largely peaceful and reportedly characterized by messages of national unity and respect, though there were a few isolated incidences of violent confrontations between supporters of opposing candidates.¹

In preliminary statements following the vote, international and domestic observers noted severe logistical challenges but praised the overall independent nature of the vote and the strong political will involved in holding the elections within a compressed time frame.² The election was welcomed by the United States. President Barack Obama stated, "I extend my congratulations to the people of Guinea, who peacefully and successfully conducted an initial round of voting in the country's first free elections since becoming an independent state in 1958."³ The U.S. Embassy affirmed that "despite time constraints and logistical problems, the government's engagement to peacefully hold historic elections in Guinea has contributed to Guinea's future political and economic future."⁴

Overview

Guinea is a former French colony in West Africa, about the size of Oregon, which has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil. Despite its wealth in natural resources, Guinea's development indicators are poor even by regional standards, and standards of living are among the worst in the world.⁵ During much of the past two decades, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability in a sub-region that has witnessed multiple armed conflicts. Between independence from France in 1958 and 1984, Guinea was ruled as a one-party, quasi-Socialist state under the charismatic but repressive leadership of Ahmed Sékou Touré. Lansana Conté came to power in a 1984 military coup d'état following Touré's death. Conté oversaw some economic and political reforms, but his critics accused him of stifling Guinea's democratic development while allowing corruption and nepotism to flourish.⁶ Upon Conté's death in December 2008, a military junta known as the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) seized power, ushering in a new period of political uncertainty.

¹ E.g., AFP, "One Dead in Guinea Election Clash," June 25, 2010.

² The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election; Urges Continued Calm in Post-Election Period," June 29, 2010.

³ AFP, "Obama Calls for Peaceful Guinea Run-Off Vote," July 7, 2010.

⁴ U.S. Embassy Conakry press statement, via Guineenews, July 8, 2010 (CRS translation from French).

⁵ See e.g., U.N. Development Program (UNDP), "Guinea: 2007/2008 Human Development Report."

⁶ Historical background on the Touré and Conté eras is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

Figure 1. Map of Guinea



U.S. Interests in Guinea

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and security; and socioeconomic and institutional development.⁷ U.S. interest has also arisen over Guinea's identity as a historically moderate, majority-Muslim country in a region affected by violent extremism. Ensuring a transition to a democratically elected, civilian-led government is currently a focus of U.S. governance concerns. Issues of interest to Congress may include stability and governance in West Africa; counter-narcotics; Guinea's natural resource wealth and extractive industries; and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Counternarcotics issues are a relatively recent area of engagement, as Guinea, among other countries in the region, has emerged as a reported transshipment point for cocaine en route from South America to Europe.⁸ In June 2010, President Obama designated Ousmane Conté, a son of the late president, as a "drug kingpin," freezing any U.S. assets held by Conté and prohibiting any transactions with him by persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction.⁹

⁷ In particular, in the final years of Conté's tenure, U.S. concern had focused on issues of governance, political stability and succession, and democratization prospects, notably following the Conté administration's violent suppression of a general strike in 2007 and in light of Conté's long-reported ill health. See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, *Prospects for Peace in Guinea*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 22, 2007 (Washington: GPO).

⁸ See CRS Report R40838, *Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy*, by Liana Sun Wyler and Nicolas Cook.

⁹ Conté, who had been imprisoned in Guinea on drug-related accusations since February 2009, was released by (continued...)

Guinea at a Glance**Population:** 10.3 million (2010 est.)**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** \$3.8 billion (2008)**GDP Per Capita:** \$350 (2008)**GDP Growth:** -2.5% (2009 est.); 4.5% (2008 est.)**Ethnic Groups:** Peuhl (Fulbe) 40%, Malinke 30%, Soussou 20%, smaller ethnic groups 10%**Religions:** Muslim 85%; Christian 8%; indigenous beliefs**Languages:** French (official); local languages**Urban Population:** 34% of total (2008 est.)**Life Expectancy at Birth:** 57.6 years (2010 est.)**HIV/AIDS Adult Prevalence:** 1.6% (2007 est.)**Adult Literacy:** 29.5% (2003 est.)**Natural Resources:** bauxite [aluminum ore], iron ore, diamonds, gold, uranium, hydropower, fish, salt**Major Export Partners:** India 17.8%, Spain 11.5%, Russia 10.8%, Germany 7.7%, US 6.7%, Ireland 4.8%, France 4.7%, Ukraine 4.2% (2008)**Major Import Partners:** China 15.4%, France 12.5%, Netherlands 12.2%, Spain 4.8%, US 4.7%, Belgium 4.6%, India 4.2% (2008)*Sources: CIA World Factbook; World Bank*

A broader U.S. interest in Guinea is the maintenance of political stability and peace, both in Guinea itself and in the surrounding sub-region. In contrast to Guinea, each of its six neighbors—notably Sierra Leone and Liberia—have suffered armed civil conflicts over the past two decades. During these conflicts, Guinea acted as a humanitarian partner to the United States by hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflicts in neighboring states. Guinea was also able to help prevent a regional spillover of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia by repelling attacks on its territory by factions from Sierra Leone and Liberia backed by former President Charles Taylor of Liberia. At the same time, Guinean government policy has presented both confluences with and challenges to U.S. objectives in the region, in the form of Guinean intervention in the civil wars in Liberia and in Guinea-Bissau.¹⁰

Guinea is a recipient of U.S. bilateral aid, notably humanitarian assistance and funding for democracy and governance programs, though certain restrictions on assistance were put in place following the 2008 coup.

Reflecting Guinea's perceived role in regional

stability, U.S. security assistance prior to the coup included military training for participation in peacekeeping missions as well as programs aimed at bolstering maritime security. In 2002, the U.S. military trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger unit to shore up border security. Guinean socioeconomic and state institutional development are also long-term U.S. policy objectives.

Guinea's extractive industry sector is of financial and strategic interest to the United States. In addition to gold, diamonds, uranium, and potential oil and gas reserves, Guinea possesses an estimated 27% or more of global reserves of bauxite, a key component of aluminum, and Guinea

(...continued)

Guinean authorities in mid-July 2010. Further details on the scope of the "kingpin" designation, made under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Title VIII, P.L. 106-120), are discussed in U.S. Treasury, *Narcotics: What You Need to Know about U.S. Sanctions Against Drug Traffickers*, July 15, 2010.

¹⁰ Former President Conté's government hosted former Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah after he was deposed by a junta, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, in 1997. The Conté government also reportedly permitted Liberian rebel groups opposed to Taylor, including the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy–Kromah faction (ULIMO-K) and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), to maintain rear bases in southern Guinea, and supplied them with arms and periodic tactical military assistance, such as cross-border mortar and helicopter air fire support. Guinea also intervened militarily in Guinea-Bissau's civil war in 1998 on behalf of the late former president, Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. On Guinea's involvement in regional warfare, see Alexis Arieff, "Still Standing: Neighbourhood Wars and Political Stability in Guinea," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, 3 (September 2009): 331-348. On LURD, see CRS Report RL32243, *Liberia: Transition to Peace*, by Nicolas Cook.

provided 16% of U.S. bauxite and alumina imports between 2004 and 2007.¹¹ Several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea. The large U.S.-based multinational aluminum firm Alcoa, for instance, is a major shareholder in the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée, a bauxite mining and export partnership with the Guinean state, while a much smaller U.S. energy firm, Hyperdynamics, holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration.¹²

Recent Congressional Actions

In March 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee convened a hearing on the political situation in Guinea and the eruption of mass anti-government demonstrations earlier that year. Several pieces of legislation related to Guinea have been introduced during the 111th Congress. These include H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen), *Condemning the violent suppression of legitimate political dissent and gross human rights abuses in the Republic of Guinea*, passed by the House on January 20, 2010; and S.Res. 345 (Boxer), *A resolution deploring the rape and assault of women in Guinea and the killing of political protesters on September 28, 2009*, passed by the Senate on February 22, 2010. Several Members criticized the CNDD following a violent military crackdown in September 2009.¹³

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Section 7008, Title VII, Division F of P.L. 111-117, signed into law on December 16, 2009), states that “none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to titles III through VI of this Act shall be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree,” with an exemption for “assistance to promote democratic elections or public participation in democratic processes.” The prohibition covers bilateral economic assistance, international security assistance, multilateral assistance, and export and investment assistance; humanitarian aid is generally exempt. The Act (Section 7070) also restricts International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs in Guinea to Expanded IMET (E-IMET)—emphasizing respect for human rights and civilian control of the military.

The Conté Regime: Final Years

The final years of Conté’s rule were marked by a decline in average living standards, the co-optation of power by members of Conté’s inner circle of businessmen and politicians, and increasing signs of public dissatisfaction. Conté’s supporters, however, argued that his leadership prevented Guinea from experiencing the kind of armed civil conflict and political instability that

¹¹ U.S. Geological Survey, *2009 Bauxite and Alumina Survey*.

¹² Hyperdynamics, a small, Texas-based oil prospecting firm, holds exploration rights in Guinea under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) signed with the Guinean government in 2006. The Guinean government later disputed the terms of the PSC, and in 2009 Hyperdynamics was forced to rescind all but 36% of its original acreage in exchange for confirmation of the validity of its remaining concession. The firm has indicated it will continue oil exploration activities within the remaining area.

¹³ “Statement of Senator Russ Feingold on Guinean Soldiers Firing Into an Opposition Rally,” September 29, 2009; Office of Congressman Howard Berman, “Guinea’s Military Leaders, Tarnished by Violence, Should Allow for Free and Fair Elections, Berman Says,” October 8, 2009; Yvette D. Clarke, “Movement of Guinean Women in the United States,” October 28, 2009, Congressional Record, Page E2648; Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, signed by Senators Russ Feingold, Richard G. Lugar, Jeanne Shaheen, Johnny Isakson, Barbara Boxer, James M. Inhofe, Patrick J. Leahy, Sam Brownback, Robert P. Casey Jr., Benjamin Cardin, Mary L. Landrieu, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, and Roland W. Burris, October 15, 2009.

have afflicted its neighbors. While Guinea held several general elections under Conté, democratic gains under his leadership were limited, and power remained concentrated in his hands. For several years prior to his death, Conté reportedly suffered from a combination of diabetes, heart problems, and possibly leukemia, and rarely appeared in public. His critics contended that his illness and increasing reclusiveness rendered him incompetent for the presidency.

Conté maintained a careful balance between political and military factions, never publicly cultivated a designated successor, and generally brooked little public opposition to his rule. The president typically co-opted political opponents and suppressed protests by force or deflated them with pledges of food and fuel subsidies or limited policy reforms, which were often only partially fulfilled. Starting in 2006, growing public discontent with economic stagnation and high inflation, the slow pace of promised democratic reforms, extensive corruption, and Conté's semi-autocratic leadership spurred a growing number of formerly rare strikes and protests. These peaked with nationwide anti-government demonstrations in early 2007. The disintegration of state institutions, together with Conté's ill health and reclusiveness, also led to power struggles within the cabinet and Conté's inner circle. Legislative elections were due to take place in 2007, but were repeatedly delayed, leaving the National Assembly with an expired mandate.

Divisions and restiveness within the military, often over pay and slow rates of promotion, also grew. Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando parachutist unit (known as the BATA). Mutinous troops exchanged fire with members of the presidential guard, and several people were reportedly killed, and dozens wounded, by stray bullets.¹⁴ After a week of unrest, Conté met with mutiny leaders, and the government agreed to pay salary arrears of \$1,100 to each soldier, sack the defense minister, and grant promotions to junior officers, ending the uprising.¹⁵ In mid-June 2008, military troops crushed an attempted mutiny by police officers in Conakry over alleged non-payment of back-wages and a failure to implement pledged promotions. This culminated in a bloody shoot-out at a police headquarters that left at least four police officers dead, according to an official tally. Key members of the CNDD junta claim to have played key roles in the 2008 mutiny.¹⁶

From 2005 onwards, many analysts were concerned about the risk of ethnic or intra-military violence and instability should Conté die in office, and the potential impact on Guinea's fragile neighbors. Others, however, argued that Guineans' historically strong sense of national identity and social cohesion meant that such a scenario was unlikely. It was widely agreed that the National Assembly, judiciary, and opposition parties lacked sufficient organization, political power, or popular legitimacy to ensure a constitutional succession.¹⁷ A post-Conté military coup was predicted by many observers, but it was unclear what military faction, if any, might prevail, as the armed forces were reportedly divided along ethnic and generational fault lines. It was also unclear whether a military seizure of power would permit a return to civilian rule and

¹⁴ Kissy Agyeman, "Tension Mounts in Guinea in Wake of Army Revolt," *Global Insight*, May 29, 2008.

¹⁵ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Settles Army Pay Dispute With Mass Promotion," Reuters, June 14, 2008.

¹⁶ Claude Pivi, a CNDD member and low-ranking officer who was promoted to Minister of Presidential Security in January 2009, styled himself the leader of the Camp Alpha Yaya mutiny. Pivi also led the crackdown on the police uprising, according to witnesses. After he became president, Dadis Camara stated he had played a key role in the mutiny and in the negotiations that ended it.

¹⁷ On the other hand, the National Assembly had arguably played the role of a vital check on executive power in February 2007, when legislators refused to extend a military state of siege that had provided cover for a massive crackdown on anti-government demonstrators.

constitutional governance. International concerns over potential instability heightened with reports that drug trafficking activities were being facilitated or directly undertaken by government officials, members of the military, and Conté associates.

The CNDD and the Transitional Government

Guinea is currently governed by a transitional government of national unity made up of civilians and members of a military junta, the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD). The transitional government was formed under an agreement signed by the CNDD's two top leaders, the *Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou*, in mid-January 2010.

The CNDD seized power on December 23, 2008, after Conté was pronounced dead following a long illness. The junta appointed as president a previously little-known military officer, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara, and he held the position until the *Joint Declaration* was implemented. A member of the politically marginalized southeastern Guerzé ethnic group, Dadis Camara was a member of the elite BATA airborne commando unit and had served as director of Army fuel supplies, a reportedly powerful position that helped him build a base of support among the rank-and-file. Other powerful CNDD members included Gen. Sekouba Konaté, former commander of the BATA, who was named Defense Minister, and Gen. Mamadouba Toto Camara, the most senior CNDD officer in terms of rank, who was named Security Minister.

As of early 2009, the CNDD had 33 members, including six civilians. The CNDD's composition was ostensibly multi-ethnic, but many key posts appeared split between ethnic Malinké and *Forestiers*, a collective term for members of several small ethnic groups based in southeast Guinea.¹⁸ Many believe that several military factions had envisioned carrying out a coup upon Conté's death, and that CNDD leaders were able to unite these factions through negotiation and promises of patronage. The junta was therefore assessed to be susceptible to internal divisions.¹⁹

In December 2009, Dadis Camara was evacuated to Morocco from Guinea to receive medical treatment after he was shot by a member of his personal guard. He currently resides in Burkina Faso, where he is reportedly convalescing. In January 2010, Defense Minister Konaté assumed executive powers as self-described Interim President. He invited the civilian opposition to join a national unity government, with opposition spokesman Jean-Marie Doré becoming prime minister. Prominent trade unionist Rabiattou Sera Diallo was named to head a National Transitional Council (CNT), a quasi-legislative body with 155 members.

December 2008 Coup: Background

Under Guinea's constitution, National Assembly Speaker Aboubacar Somparé was mandated to assume power following Conté's death, with presidential elections to be organized within 60 days. Instead, on December 23, 2008, the CNDD announced on national television that it had taken power. The junta dissolved the constitution and the National Assembly, banned political and

¹⁸ SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 11; SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4; *La Lettre du Continent*, "Un Chef, Une Armée, Des Clans!" October 8, 2009.

union activity, and promised elections within two years. The coup leaders justified their actions on the basis that Guinea's ruling elite had provided poor leadership.²⁰

It was initially unclear what the composition of the CNDD was and whether the junta represented the military as a whole, or merely a faction.²¹ On the afternoon of December 24, reportedly following tense internal negotiations, the CNDD announced that junta spokesman Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara had been chosen as president.²² Dadis Camara paraded into downtown Conakry, where he was greeted by cheering crowds. Guineans' initially positive response to the CNDD appeared to be due to widespread dissatisfaction with Somparé, senior military staff, and other figures seen as representing the Conté era, along with relief that the coup had been carried out without bloodshed.²³

International Reactions

The United States condemned the coup, called for "a return to civilian rule and the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections as soon as possible," and announced restrictions on bilateral aid.²⁴ Other donors also announced aid restrictions, though France continued all development aid and military cooperation programs. ECOWAS and the AU, both of which have policies against accepting non-constitutional changes of power, condemned the coup and suspended Guinea's membership in their organizations.²⁵

The Presidency of Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara

Upon assuming power, the CNDD immediately took steps to assert its authority, for instance by suspending civilian regional administrators and replacing them with military commanders. Dadis Camara sought to centralize power and neutralize potential opposition, both to the CNDD and to

²⁰ In the broadcast announcing the coup, CNDD spokesman Captain Moussa Dadis Camara stated that the incumbent regime had permitted the systematic "embezzlement of public funds, general corruption, impunity established as method of government, and anarchy in the management of state affairs" leading to "a catastrophic economic situation." He also cited as justification a pattern of national poverty, despite the existence of abundant natural resources, the rise of drug trafficking, and diverse other crimes and patterns of poor governance. "Guinea: Army Dissolves Cabinet...." via Open Source Center.

²¹ Witnesses suggested that the CNDD controlled Camp Alpha Yaya (Conakry's largest military base) and the main Radio-Télévision Guinéenne (RTG) offices, while "loyalist" soldiers who did not support the coup initially retained control of Camp Almamy Samory Touré (where the senior military leadership was based) and a subsidiary RTG station. On December 24, the CNDD accused the former government of importing mercenaries in a bid to regain power. (The claim did not appear to be borne out by events.)

²² RFI, "Guinean Putschists Said Still Debating Choice of Leader," December 23, 2008 and AFP, "Guinea: Analysts Say Divisions Within Military Explain Attempted Coup," December 23, 2008, via Open Source.

²³ Arieff interviews, Conakry, December 24-26, 2008. While there is little public opinion data available, reports suggest Assembly Speaker Somparé, Conté's constitutional successor, was deeply unpopular. In 2005, the International Crisis Group reported that "Not one person consulted by Crisis Group expressed the desire for Somparé to take over. Once an ardent member of Sékou Touré's PDG party, he is often described as a Touré-era holdover, useful to the PUP primarily because of his tendency toward demagoguery and authoritarianism." (*Stopping Guinea's Slide*, 2005: 8.) In explaining their aversion to a constitutional succession led by Somparé, many pointed out that the National Assembly's five-year mandate had expired in late 2007, and that the constitution had been amended in 2001 in a disputed referendum. For a critical analysis of this argument, see SSRIC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 2-3.

²⁴ AFP, "After Coup, U.S. Halts Aid to Guinea," January 7, 2009; U.S. Embassy News Digest, January 29, 2009.

²⁵ ECOWAS Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, December 2001, Article 1(b) and (c); and Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4(p).

his dominant leadership within it. The CNDD-appointed civilian prime minister, Kabiné Komara, was viewed as having little decision-making power, and CNDD members directly controlled key government functions. The CNDD also created several new ministerial-level positions, headed by members of the military or close civilian associates. Several key ministries, including security, defense, and finance, and the governor of the Central Bank, were attached to the presidency.

Signs of internal dissent within the military soon emerged following the CNDD takeover. Dadis Camara ordered 22 generals—nearly the entire senior military leadership—into retirement. Many were later arrested, primarily based on accusations of plotting against the CNDD. In January 2009, two CNDD officers were sacked for unclear reasons, and in April, as many as 20 military officers, including a CNDD member, were reportedly arrested in a crackdown on an alleged counter-coup attempt. In July 2009, General Mamadouba “Toto” Camara, Minister of Security and the most senior-ranked CNDD member, was assaulted by members of the presidential guard. The incident heightened fears that the CNDD was vulnerable to internal fractures and violence.²⁶

Counter-Narcotics and Anti-Corruption Efforts

Soon after taking power, Dadis Camara initiated populist moves to crack down on drug trafficking. He also announced he would review the mining code and all mining and prospecting licenses, conduct an audit of the Conté government and foreign companies operating in Guinea, and initiate the privatization of water, energy, and telecommunications firms.²⁷ These measures appeared designed to signal a break with the Conté regime, enhance the junta’s popularity, and respond to international and domestic concerns that Guinea, among other countries in the region, had become a transshipment hub for cocaine en route from Latin America to Europe.

CNDD actions largely relied on the “naming and shaming” of alleged wrongdoers, rather than advancing institutional reform, and they were fraught with procedural irregularities and reported abuses of power. At least 20 high-profile individuals, including top Conté officials, senior police officers, the former chief of the armed forces, and a son and brother-in-law of the late president were arrested in 2009 on drug trafficking allegations.²⁸ Separately, a committee was established to audit firms and individuals accused of having embezzled public funds, dodged tax payments, or entered into corrupt government contracts under Conté.²⁹ Dadis Camara personally interrogated alleged traffickers, former officials, and businesspeople on national television, in some cases eliciting detailed “confessions” of drug deals and mining-related corruption. Many Guineans welcomed the attempt to pursue powerful figures in the former regime. However, concerns arose

²⁶ BBC News Online, “Troops Crawl After Guinea Attack,” July 24, 2009; United Nations, *Contingency Plan Conakry*, August 2009; AFP, “Guinée: Une ONG Redoute une ‘Dérive Dictatoriale,’ Dénonce la Torture,” August 12, 2009.

²⁷ Oxford Analytica, “Guinea: Junta Under Conflicting Transition Pressures,” April 9, 2009. In Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perception Index, Guinea placed 173 out of 180 countries.

²⁸ Conté’s son Ousmane, a military officer, admitted involvement in trafficking, but denied being a “kingpin.” See Rukmini Callimachi, “In TV confessions, Curtain Lifted on a Narcostate,” AP, March 14, 2009; AFP, “Son of Guinea’s Late President Confesses to Drugs Trafficking,” February 26, 2009; Amadou Toure, “Society: ‘Biggest’ Drug Trafficker’s Presence in Conakry: Police DG Gives ‘Orders’,” *Guineenews*, May 5, 2007 via BBC Monitoring Africa; AP, “20 Indicted on Drug Charges in Guinea,” June 13, 2009, among others.

²⁹ Several had previously been cited during audits of public institutions carried out by former Prime Minister Lansana Kouyaté, who headed the government between February 2007 and May 2008 (see **Appendix B**).

over the extra-judicial nature of these efforts, and some arrests appeared to be politically selective or extortionist.³⁰ Several CNDD members were also believed to have ties to the drug trade.

Overall, CNDD anti-drug efforts concentrated power in the presidency and sidelined civilian-led anti-drug agencies in favor of the military.³¹ Dadis Camara created a new presidentially controlled agency, the State Secretariat for Special Services, to curb drug and human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime. A military officer, Capt. Moussa Tiegboro Camara, was placed in charge of the agency, with a corps of gendarmes and soldiers for enforcement.³² The agency's legal mandate and authorities were not clearly defined, including vis-à-vis the judiciary or police.³³ This raised due process and human rights concerns, and some military elements participating in anti-drug efforts were accused of abuses of power.³⁴

In July 2009, the CNDD announced the discovery in Conakry of hundreds of pounds of chemicals that it said could be used for making drugs or bombs. The U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) concluded that some of the chemicals were drug precursors and that the seizure was "the best evidence yet for clandestine laboratory activity" in West Africa.³⁵ At the same time, no drugs were seized at the sites where chemicals were found. The CNDD agency charged with counter-narcotics announced it had arrested 11 people in connection with the seizures.

Rule of Law Concerns

Under Dadis Camara's leadership, security forces were accused of looting private homes and businesses in Conakry, carrying out arbitrary arrests and detentions, targeting perceived opponents, and other abuses of power.³⁶ Advocates separately raised concerns over an apparent rise in vigilante attacks, particularly after a CNDD official called on the Guinean population to "burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed," noting that prisons were already overcrowded.³⁷ The CNDD also reportedly detained journalists on multiple occasions for reasons that were not publicly explained or that related to alleged press criticisms of the CNDD.³⁸

³⁰ See, e.g., *Aminata.com*, "Les Audits à la Guinéenne: De la parade tout trouvée aux inquiétantes maladroites," February 2, 2009. The International Crisis Group expressed concern that "the process is more about getting hard cash for the new regime than re-introducing the rule of law." *The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 6.

³¹ The police anti-narcotics bureau, known as OCAD, was criticized in the past for being allegedly infiltrated by drug traffickers. However, the agency's track record reportedly improved after a new director was appointed in late 2008.

³² Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009.

³³ In June, Tiegboro Camara reportedly called on the Guinean population to "burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed," noting that prisons were already overcrowded. Reuters, "Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief," June 2, 2009.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch (HRW), "Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009.

³⁵ UNODC, "Evidence of Clandestine Laboratory Activity in West Africa," July 31, 2009.

³⁶ HRW, "Guinea: Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009; *Guineeactu.com*, "Perquisition Chez la SG de la CNTG : Le Capitaine Tiègboro et Raby s'expliquent," March 5, 2009; Human Rights Watch, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009.

³⁷ Reuters, "Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief," June 2, 2009.

³⁸ See, for instance, Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), "Guinea Alert: Soldiers Brutalise Journalist, Briefly Detain Him," March 20, 2009; MFWA, "Guinea Alert: Journalist and Family Held Incommunicado," June 5, 2009; MFWA, "Guinea Alert: Journalist Arrested, Detained Incommunicado," August 13, 2009; MFWA, "Guinea Alert: Cameraman Detained Briefly and His Film Destroyed," January 14, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009; and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), "IFJ Condemns Threats on Freedom of Expression in Guinea," September 4, 2009.

Several CNDD members were also accused of having committed human rights abuses under Conté. They include individuals who were in a position of command responsibility during nationwide anti-government protests in January and February 2007, when Guinean security forces allegedly opened fire on demonstrators and committed other serious abuses against civilians.³⁹ CNDD member Claude Pivi is believed by many to have overseen violent reprisals against police officers in June 2008 (during a crackdown on a police mutiny in Conakry), among other abuses.

The Stalled Political Transition

Dadis Camara initially committed to overseeing free and fair elections and a “peaceful transition” to a civilian-led government. He also promised that neither he nor any CNDD member would run for office. In March 2009, the CNDD agreed to an elections timetable proposed by a broad coalition of political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups known as the *Forces Vives* (“Active Forces”), in which both legislative and presidential elections would take place in 2009. However, in August 2009, the CNDD postponed elections until early 2010. Dadis Camara also indicated that he might choose to run for president, compounding widespread suspicions that junta members were reluctant to leave power.

The September 28 Protests

On September 28, 2009, security forces opened fire on tens of thousands of protesters gathered in and around an outdoor stadium in Conakry to protest repeated election delays and Dadis Camara’s perceived intention to run for president. The protest began peacefully: several political leaders arrived at the stadium and planned to address the crowd, while demonstrators reportedly chanted, “We want true democracy” and held signs reading “Down with the Army in Power.”⁴⁰ At least 150 people were killed and over 1,000 wounded in the crackdown. Many believe the death toll to have been significantly higher, and reports indicate that the military engaged in a systematic cover-up by removing bodies from the site and burying them in mass graves.⁴¹

Human Rights Watch reported that the military response was “premeditated” and that soldiers and gendarmes—including members of the Presidential Guard and of the CNDD’s anti-drug and anti-crime unit, both of which ostensibly answered to the presidency—directly fired on the stadium crowd and stabbed those fleeing with knives and bayonets.⁴² Security forces also reportedly carried out lootings and rapes in residential areas of Conakry during the melee. Several local journalists were assaulted and threatened by soldiers.⁴³ In the days following the protests, lootings

³⁹ See HRW, “Guinea: Plan Elections and Hold Rights Abusers Accountable,” January 21, 2009. An investigation by a coalition of local human rights organizations concluded that 186 people were killed and over a thousand injured during the protests. In addition, human rights activists allege that security forces engaged in arbitrary arrests, mistreatment of detainees, and rape. See Coalition Pour la Défense des Victimes des Événements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les Violations Commises en République de Guinée Pendant les Événements de Janvier et Février 2007*, November 2007; and HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

⁴⁰ AP, “Guinea Soldiers Shoot Dead at Least 10 Protesters,” September 28, 2009; Adam Nossiter, “Over 100 Protesters Killed in Guinea,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2009.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated,” October 27, 2009.

⁴² HRW, “Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated,” October 27, 2009; HRW, *Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea*, December 2009.

⁴³ Reporters Without Borders, “‘We Know You, We’ll Make You Pay,’ Soldiers Tell Journalists,” October 8, 2009.

continued and sporadic confrontations were reported in several opposition strongholds in Conakry. Several dozen protesters were detained in military and police facilities, where they were reportedly denied access by international monitors.⁴⁴

At least six opposition leaders were injured, and three were beaten by soldiers. Several were arrested before eventually being taken to a hospital, where they were temporarily barred from communicating with the media.⁴⁵ The leaders' homes were reportedly looted by soldiers in their absence, and at least one was sprayed with machine gun fire. Several of the leaders later said they had been threatened with death.⁴⁶

The deliberate infliction of violence against women protesters provoked particular outrage among Guineans and the international community. According to numerous reports, soldiers molested and raped dozens of women openly in public, including in full view of military commanders.⁴⁷ Some women were also reportedly detained for days and tortured in police stations and military camps. While sexual violence by the military against civilians has been documented in the past—notably during anti-government protests in 2007—the public and large-scale nature of the attacks appeared to be a new tactic.

The report of a U.N. commission of inquiry, released on December 29, 2009, confirmed 156 deaths, 109 instances of sexual violence, “hundreds of other cases of torture or of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment,” and dozens of extrajudicial arrests. The commission concluded that the crackdown may have constituted crimes against humanity and recommended a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC).⁴⁸ In October, the chief prosecutor for the ICC announced he was opening a “preliminary examination” of the situation.⁴⁹

CNDD Statements

Dadis Camara stated that he was “disgusted” by the violence of September 28. At the same time, the junta leader denied any responsibility for the killings and abuses, contending that he was not in command of the armed forces and suggesting that military disorder under Conté caused a breakdown in the chain of command. He also accused the opposition of being at fault for the September 28 violence and for seeking to overthrow the government.⁵⁰ In February 2010, a

⁴⁴ HRW, “Guinea: Free or Charge Detainees,” October 4, 2009; U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Guinea Victims of Security Forces Crackdown: Situation Report No. 3,” October 18, 2009.

⁴⁵ AFP, “Guinée: Trois Opposants Ayant Été Hospitalisés ont Regagné Leur Domicile,” September 29, 2009; RFI, “Calme Tendu Après la Sanglante Répression,” September 29, 2009.

⁴⁶ AFP, “Guinée: Les maisons de deux opposants pillées par des militaires (témoins),” September 28, 2009 ; RFI, “Calme Tendu Après la Sanglante Répression,” September 29, 2009.

⁴⁷ HRW, “Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated,” October 27, 2009; AFP, “Guinée: J’ai Vu les Soldats Mettre le Fusil dans le Sexe des Femmes,” October 5, 2009; Adam Nossiter, “In a Guinea Seized by Violence, Women Are Prey,” *The New York Times*, October 6, 2009; U.N. IRIN, “Guinea: In the aftermath of rape,” October 9, 2009.

⁴⁸ *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry Mandated to Establish the Facts and Circumstances of the Events of 29 September 2009 in Guinea*, December 29, 2009.

⁴⁹ ICC Office of the Prosecutor, “ICC Prosecutor Confirms Situation in Guinea Under Examination,” October 14, 2009.

⁵⁰ AFP, “Guinea Under Fire After Scores Killed in Opposition Crackdown,” September 28, 2009; Agence Guinéenne de Presse, “Discours A La Nation du Chef de l’Etat,” November 3, 2009; *Jeune Afrique*, “Massacres du 28 Septembre: Dadis a-t-il été l’instigateur?” September 30, 2009; AFP, “Massacre en Guinée: Dadis Camara Ne Se Reconnaît ‘Aucune Responsabilité,’” October 4, 2009 ; Adam Nossiter, “Guinea Seethes as a Captain Rules at Gunpoint,” *The New York Times*, October 3, 2009.

CNDD investigation cleared Dadis Camara of any responsibility and found that Lt. Aboubacar “Toumba” Diakité—who was by then in hiding after shooting Dadis Camara in December 2009—carried sole blame for September 28 abuses.⁵¹

International Reactions

In response to the crackdown, regional organizations and donors sought to further isolate the CNDD. The International Contact Group on Guinea, of which the United States is a member, called for a “new transitional authority” to lead toward elections.⁵² Senior U.S. officials called for CNDD leaders to step down.⁵³ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that she was “appalled by the violence against women.”⁵⁴ The United States also imposed targeted travel restrictions.⁵⁵ The crackdown also provoked criticism by several U.S. Members of Congress.⁵⁶

The European Union (EU) and AU announced targeted sanctions against CNDD members and certain associates; ECOWAS, the EU, and the AU additionally imposed an arms embargo.⁵⁷ France condemned the violence and announced the suspension of military aid; previously, France had been one of the only donors to continue such aid to the CNDD.⁵⁸ On September 30, the U.N. Security Council, chaired by U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice, urged Guinean authorities to “put an end to the violence, bring the perpetrators to justice [and] release all political prisoners, opposition leaders and individuals who are being denied due process under the law.”⁵⁹

⁵¹ BBC News Online, “Guinea Aide Blamed for Massacre,” February 2, 2010.

⁵² AFP, “Guinea Junta Must Step Aside: Contact Group,” October 13, 2009.

⁵³ Adam Nossiter, “U.S. Envoy Protests Violence in Guinea,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 2009; U.S. Fed News, “Guinea Violence ‘Vile Violation’ of Human Rights, Clinton Says,” October 9, 2009.

⁵⁴ Congressional Quarterly Transcript, “Secretary of State Clinton Holds Press Conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi,” October 6, 2009.

⁵⁵ State Department, “Guinea: Travel Restrictions,” October 29, 2009.

⁵⁶ “Statement of Senator Russ Feingold on Guinean Soldiers Firing Into an Opposition Rally,” September 29, 2009; Office of Congressman Howard Berman, “Guinea’s Military Leaders, Tarnished by Violence, Should Allow for Free and Fair Elections, Berman Says,” October 8, 2009; Yvette D. Clarke, “Movement of Guinean Women in the United States,” October 28, 2009, Congressional Record, Page E2648; Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, signed by Senators Russ Feingold, Richard G. Lugar, Jeanne Shaheen, Johnny Isakson, Barbara Boxer, James M. Inhofe, Patrick J. Leahy, Sam Brownback, Robert P. Casey Jr., Benjamin Cardin, Mary L. Landrieu, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, and Roland W. Burris, October 15, 2009.

⁵⁷ The EU adopted sanctions against members of the junta and “associated individuals responsible for the violent repression or the political impasse in the country.” African Union sanctions were announced on October 29 and include denial of visas, travel restrictions, and asset freezes targeting “the president and members of the CNDD, members of the government, and any other individuals, civilian or military, whose activities are aimed at maintaining the anti-constitutional status quo in Guinea” (CRS translation from French). Reuters, “West African Leaders Impose Arms Embargo on Guinea,” October 17, 2009; Voice of America, “EU Arms Embargo Imposed on Guinea,” October 27, 2009; *Europolitique*, “UE/Guinée: L’UE Adopte des Sanctions Contre la Guinée”; State Department, “Guinea: Travel Restrictions,” October 29, 2009; AU Peace and Security Council Communiqué, October 29, 2009. African Union, “AU Commission Expresses Grave Concern Over Situation in Guinea,” September 29, 2009.

⁵⁸ AFP, “France Condemns ‘Violent Repression’ in Guinea,” September 28, 2009; Reuters, “Clash Toll in Guinea Soars, France Cuts Aid,” September 29, 2009.

⁵⁹ VOA News, “UN Security Council Concerned About Guinea,” September 30, 2009.

Dadis Camara's Exit and Growing Instability

On December 3, 2009, Dadis Camara was shot in the head by a commander of his presidential guard, Aboubacar "Toumba" Diakité, who had been cited in the U.N. investigation as a key instigator of the September 28 violence. Dadis Camara was evacuated to Morocco to receive medical care. After the shooting, Diakité went into hiding. The shooting and subsequent power vacuum coincided with reports of rising ethnic tensions and instability within the CNDD and wider armed forces. Reports also indicated that the CNDD was recruiting hundreds of irregular fighters and training them as militias in camps located near Conakry, and referred to rising arms imports and the presence of foreign mercenaries.⁶⁰ Several targeted killings were reported in Conakry, including at least one government official.⁶¹

January 2010: Formation of a Government of National Unity

On January 15, 2010, Dadis Camara, CNDD Defense Minister Gen. Sekouba Konaté, and ECOWAS mediator Blaise Compaoré (president of Burkina Faso) announced a new agreement in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.⁶² The *Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou* provided that:

- Konaté assume executive powers as "Interim President" and that a government of national unity be formed, along with a quasi-legislative body, the National Transition Council;
- a prime minister be appointed from the *Forces Vives* ("active forces"), an opposition coalition of political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups;
- a presidential election be organized within six months of the date of the agreement;
- Konaté, the prime minister, and members of the unity government, the CNDD, the CNT, and the defense and security forces be precluded from running for president; and
- Guinea's security forces be reorganized and reformed.⁶³

⁶⁰ Richard Moncrieff, "Repression and Violence Are a Danger to the Whole Region," *The Independent*, September 30, 2009; *Beeld* (South Africa), "Secretive Mails Sent to Recruits," October 18, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated," October 27, 2009; Reuters, "Foreign Gunmen Helped Guinea Crackdown—Witnesses," October 3, 2009; RFI, "Violences Imputées aux Milices Libériennes," October 6, 2009; IHS Global Insight, "Liberian Authorities Boost Border Control in Response to Guinean Refugee Crisis," October 21, 2009; International Crisis Group, *Guinea: Military Rule Must End*, October 16, 2009; U.N. IRIN, "Caravans and Kola Nuts—Keeping a Lid on Communal Tensions," October 30, 2009; BBC, "'Big Guns' Herald Guinea's Crisis," October 31, 2009; Ed Butler, "Guinea's Military Junta Imports Millions of Dollars Worth of Arms Despite Embargo," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2009.

⁶¹ Reuters, "Guinea Sees New Violence After Protest Crackdown," October 23, 2009; RFI via BBC Monitoring, "Twelve Opposition Supporters Said Killed in Guinea's 'Targeted Killings,'" October 23, 2009.

⁶² In October 2009, ECOWAS appointed Blaise Compaoré to mediate between the CNDD and the opposition *Forces Vives* coalition. Some observers and Guineans expressed concern at Compaoré's appointment, as he himself came to power in a military coup and later legitimized his rule by running for president, and he has reportedly militarily or politically interfered in conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.

⁶³ "Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou," State Department Office of Language Services, January 2010.

Dadis Camara has since declined to return to Guinea, and he has given public statements supporting the transitional government and progress toward elections.⁶⁴ *Forces Vives* spokesman Jean-Marie Doré was named Prime Minister on January 19, and in February he appointed a 34-person cabinet composed of a mix of CNDD members and civilians. In early March, a National Transition Council (CNT) was inaugurated as a quasi-legislative body, with 155 members representing political parties, trade unions, civil society groups, and other socio-economic demographics.⁶⁵ The CNT drafted a new constitution and a new electoral code, which were promulgated by presidential decree.

As Interim President, Konaté has moved to build donor and regional support, effecting multiple state visits to neighboring countries and to France. Using a combination of patronage and force, he has also systematically consolidated power within the fractious armed forces. He closed down militia training camps and arrested or otherwise sidelined a number of military commanders seen as loyal to Dadis Camara and other potential rivals.⁶⁶ In early July, Konaté granted mass promotions to much of the military's officer corps, in what was widely seen as a reward to soldiers for refraining from intervening in the vote. Konaté received widespread praise for instituting greater discipline and control within the military, and for stemming military abuses against civilians. However, his actions have largely focused on internal maneuvering and have not necessarily paved the way for greater civilian oversight under an eventual elected government.

Elections

On June 27, 2010, Guineans went to the polls to select from among 24 presidential candidates. None reached the threshold required for an outright win, necessitating a run-off vote between the two leading candidates. The vote was historically significant, the first national election in Guinea's history organized by an independent commission and without an incumbent candidate. The second round poll is expected to be held in early August. Campaigning was largely peaceful and reportedly characterized by messages of national unity and respect, though there were a few isolated incidences of violent confrontations between supporters of opposing candidates.⁶⁷ Legislative elections are also expected to take place, but they have not yet been scheduled.

In preliminary statements following the vote, international and domestic election monitoring groups observed that severe logistical challenges—such as shortages of election materials, a lack of polling stations in some areas, insufficient poll-worker training, and problems with the distribution of voter cards—had hindered polling. They praised the overall free nature of the vote, however, noting that strong political had been necessary to ensure that the election was held on schedule and within a compressed time frame. The U.S.-based Carter Center concluded in a statement that “despite procedural flaws and logistical challenges, this election, marked by high voter turnout and wide participation, was an important step forward in Guinea's process of democratization,” and noted that the electoral commission “exhibited good faith efforts in their attempts to ensure a credible, transparent, and peaceful process.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Guineenews, “Moussa Dadis Camara S'Adresse au Peuple de Guinée Depuis Ougadougou,” June 14, 2010.

⁶⁵ Guineenews, “Liste Complète des Membres du CNT,” March 8, 2010.

⁶⁶ Reuters, “Guinea Says Arrests Mutinous Pro-Camara Soldiers,” April 2, 2010.

⁶⁷ E.g., AFP, “One Dead in Guinea Election Clash,” June 25, 2010.

⁶⁸ The Carter Center, “The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election; Urges Continued Calm in Post- (continued...) ”

According to preliminary official results released on July 2, the two candidates who will compete in the run-off are Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party, who took 39.7% of the vote, and Alpha Condé of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party, who took 20.7%. The official participation rate among registered voters was 77%, according to official figures. In many ways, Diallo and Condé present contrasting political histories (see **Appendix A**). They also represent Guinea's two largest ethnic groups: the Peuhl/Fulbe (Diallo), who are thought to represent roughly 40% of the population, and the Malinké/Mandingo (Condé), thought to represent roughly 30%. While Diallo held a series of ministerial portfolios and served for two years as prime minister under President Conté, Condé was a longtime Conté opponent and spent much of the past 40 years in exile in France. Diallo's experience in government, and Condé's outsider status, are both thought to carry positive and negative aspects in terms of electability.

While observer groups did not report evidence of systematic problems with the June 27 vote, several leading candidates protested that the preliminary results reflected fraud, manipulation, and mismanagement. These included Condé as well as third- and fourth-place contenders Sidya Touré (who took 15.6% of the vote) and Lansana Kouyaté (who took 7.9%). Touré supporters held a series of rallies in Conakry protesting the results and claiming that the tally had been manipulated by the electoral commission in Conakry. Several candidates are expected to bring legal challenges to the preliminary results—as is permitted under Guinea's electoral law—prior to the second round of voting.

Election Administration and Funding

Elections were organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). The CENI was created in 2007 as an oversight body, part of a series of reforms agreed to under Conté; in 2009, Dadis Camara made the CENI the lead agency for elections administration. The interior ministry (known in Guinea as the MATAP), which was previously responsible for organizing elections, played a secondary role in assisting the CENI with logistics. The CENI is headed by Ben Sekou Sylla, a former civil society leader.

The elections were projected to cost roughly \$28 million dollars, including \$11.3 million for voter registration.⁶⁹ The Guinean government disbursed the equivalent of \$7.6 million, in addition to funds previously designated by Conté's administration for use in legislative elections. Major donors included the United States, the European Union, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. China also reportedly contributed, in the form of motorcycles for the transportation of electoral materials and other equipment. The U.N. Development Program acted as a coordinator for international donor assistance to the electoral process.

The legal framework for the elections consisted of a new constitution adopted in April 2010 and a new electoral law adopted in May. Both were drafted by the CNT and promulgated by Konate via a presidential decree. While both contained improvements over previous frameworks—such as the institution of term limits, guarantees as to the CENI's independence, and the introduction of a

(...continued)

Election Period," June 29, 2010.

⁶⁹ The \$28 million figure covers election costs from February 2010 through the June presidential elections; it does not include certain pre-election expenditures that occurred prior to February 2010. USAID responses to CRS queries, July 2009-March 2010.

single-ballot system—implementation was reportedly inconsistent, in part due to the short timeline prior to the vote. In addition, several deadlines required under the electoral law were not respected, for example, with regard to the determination of polling station locations and the development of new voting procedures.⁷⁰

Election Security

Despite widespread concerns over potential election-related violence, campaigning was peacefully conducted, and the military largely adhered to promises not to intervene in electoral preparations or management. A new, 16,000-member security force was created in the lead-up to elections, known by its French acronym as the FOSSEPEL. It was constituted from equal numbers of police and gendarmes, recruited from existing personnel, and commanded by the chiefs of staff of the gendarmerie and armed forces. France and Spain assisted in training the FOSSEPEL, with participation from Mali. The United States, through the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), funded a contractor to act as a consultant on elections security and broader police reform issues.

Economic Difficulties

Guinea's economy relies heavily on primary commodity exports, notably bauxite (a mineral ore used to produce aluminum), gold, diamonds, uranium, and iron ore. Guinea is thought to have the world's largest bauxite reserves, and joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations have historically provided about 80% of Guinea's foreign exchange.⁷¹ Guinea may also have oil and gas reserves, and has significant hydro-electric and agricultural potential. Prior to 2008, Guinea's natural resources sector was set to expand, partly in response to increasing global commodity prices. In early December 2008, the African Development Bank announced the approval of a \$200 million loan to partly finance a \$6.3 billion bauxite mining and alumina refinery project in Guinea. The project was reportedly expected to be the largest ever investment in the country.⁷²

While Guinea's economic potential is considerable, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is estimated at only \$386, and GDP growth was negative in 2009. Over 70% of the workforce is employed in (largely subsistence) agriculture.⁷³ Limited national infrastructure, periodic labor strikes, corruption, and perceived political instability are considered to pose barriers to growth. A lack of capacity and the poor quality of national education are also hindrances; the rate of children enrolled in school is thought to have declined since 2007.⁷⁴ Reports suggest government finances have been depleted due to corruption and mismanagement, a drop in the collection of import duties, declining global mineral commodity prices, misguided monetary policy (including

⁷⁰ The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election..."

⁷¹ State Department, "Background Note: Guinea." The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG) is a joint venture in which 49% of the shares are owned by the Guinean Government and 51% by an international consortium led by Alcoa and Rio Tinto-Alcan.

⁷² EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 17.

⁷³ World Bank development indicators.

⁷⁴ Voice of America, "Overcrowding, Stalled Reform Keep Guinea's Children Out of School," May 13, 2010.

printing large amounts of new currency in 2009), and the freezing of some foreign aid.⁷⁵ Guinea's external debt burden—\$3.1 billion in 2008 according to the World Bank—is also considerable.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Despite its resources, living standards in Guinea are among the worst in the world. Poor living conditions helped spark nationwide anti-government protests in 2007, and some fear that continued economic decline could lead to further unrest. Access to running water and electricity is rare, even in Conakry and other urban centers; shortages of basic goods, including petrol, cooking gas, and staple food commodities, are common. The World Health Organization lists Guinea as a “country under surveillance” with respect to possible complex humanitarian emergency needs.⁷⁶ According to figures released by the United Nations in May 2009, the rate of chronic malnutrition increased over the previous two years, from 34.8% to 36.2%; 8.3% of Guinean children are thought to suffer from serious malnutrition.⁷⁷ The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.6%.⁷⁸ Annual health expenditures per capita amount to only \$26, according to the World Bank.⁷⁹

Recent Mining Sector Developments

The global economic crisis and perceived political instability have negatively affected Guinea's mining output since 2008, and have caused investment projects to be delayed or canceled.⁸⁰ Still, a number of new mining agreements were signed in the first half of 2010, during the transitional government. For example, the Brazil-based company Vale announced a \$2.5 billion deal to acquire a 51% stake in the Simandou project. This and other such deals have come under criticism from Guinean opposition groups, who contend that the transitional government did not have the right to conclude significant sovereign agreements prior to elections.⁸¹

Previously, the government's unpredictable actions under Dadis Camara, who publicly threatened to close or nationalize various mining projects, reportedly sparked fears among international investors concerned about the security of their assets.⁸² For example, in April 2009, the Guinean government reclaimed ownership of an alumina refinery that the Russia-based aluminum producer RusAl had purchased from the state in 2006, reportedly for \$19 million. Dadis Camara

⁷⁵ EIU, “Guinea Economy: Government faces fiscal crisis,” June 1, 2009. The EIU has elsewhere noted that “the poor quality of fiscal reporting in Guinea makes it difficult to estimate the size of the fiscal deficit” (EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 8). Ama Egyaba Baidu-Forson, “IMF Expresses Concern Over Guinea's Financial Situation,” IHS Global Insight, March 30, 2010.

⁷⁶ World Health Organization, *Africa Weekly Emergency Situation Update*, February 8, 2010.

⁷⁷ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Information Bulletin May 2009*.

⁷⁸ CIA World Factbook.

⁷⁹ World Bank global development indicators, statistic as of 2007 (est.).

⁸⁰ EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, June 2009; Lydia Polgreen, “As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009; Reuters, “Guinea Bauxite Income Seen Down 60 Pct in 2010,” September 28, 2009, and “Factbox-Guinea's Major Mining Operations,” September 16, 2009.

⁸¹ Reuters, “INTERVIEW-Guinea Opposition Says Vale Iron Deal Invalid,” May 4, 2010.

⁸² EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 16; Andrea Hotter, “Guinea Ruler Worries Miners,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009; Reuters, “Analysis-Guinea RUSAL Dispute Sends Warning Sign to Miners,” September 16, 2009.

accused RusAl and former government officials of corruption and declared the sale void, a decision later upheld by a Guinean court. The junta subsequently valued the refinery at \$257 million and accused RusAl of failing to pay significant taxes and royalties. RusAl has repeatedly stated that the refinery was legitimately acquired; negotiations over its status are ongoing.⁸³

Another case of disputed foreign asset ownership centers around the multinational mining company Rio Tinto. In August 2009, Rio Tinto announced it would pull its equipment from its Simandou iron ore project, earlier valued at over \$6 billion and potentially one of the largest mining interests in West Africa, after the CNDD indicated it would uphold a decision made under Conté to award half of Rio Tinto's concession to another company, BSG Resources Guinea. The latter firm is a subsidiary of Israeli businessman Benny Steinmetz's BSG Resources. Rio Tinto rejected the decision and pledged to fight it in court. In March 2010, Rio Tinto and China's state-run mining firm Chinalco reportedly signed a non-binding, \$1.35 billion deal to develop a large iron ore mine in Simandou; Chinalco was said to acquire a 47% stake in the venture.⁸⁴ In the weeks preceding the June 2010 presidential election, the leadership of the transitional government reportedly warned Rio Tinto to publicly accept the transfer of part of its concession, or else incur further losses. The warning may have stemmed from fears among some officials who benefited from the transaction that a new elected government would revise the decision.⁸⁵

Chinese Minerals-For-Infrastructure Deal

In October 2009, the Guinean government announced a \$7 billion minerals-for-infrastructure agreement with a Hong Kong-based firm, the China International Fund (CIF), in partnership with the Angolan state-owned conglomerate Sonangol. Previously, following the December 2008 coup, China had appeared poised to abandon prior plans to invest in major infrastructure projects in Guinea due to perceived political instability and weak global commodity markets.⁸⁶ While the CIF, which has been linked to multi-billion dollar deals in Angola and other African countries, is ostensibly a privately owned company, an investigative report released in July 2009 by the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission found that "key personnel have ties to Chinese state-owned enterprises and government agencies."⁸⁷ Chinese officials maintain that the company's "actions have no connection with the Chinese government." The deal has been criticized by donors and the Guinean opposition.

⁸³ Reuters, "Guinea Court Reclaims Friguia From RUSAL," September 10, 2009; *Ria Novosti*, "Guinea Demands \$430 Mln from Russia's RusAl in Alumina Business Dispute," January 27, 2010.

⁸⁴ Robert Guy Matthews, "Mining Giants Are Forced to Lessen Global Ambitions," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2009; Neil Ford, "Junta Uncertainty Clouds Guinea Mining Sector," *African Business*, February 1, 2009; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Mulls Independent Simandou Inquiry: Rio," *Dow Jones Newswires*, March 5, 2009; David Robertson, "Guinea Accuses Rio Tinto of Threat to Civil Peace," *The Times* (London), July 23, 2009; Talek Harris, "Rio Tinto Signs Huge China Deal as Staff Await Trial," AFP, March 19, 2010.

⁸⁵ *Africa Confidential*, "Mine Not Yours," June 25, 2010.

⁸⁶ Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

⁸⁷ USCC, *The 88 Queensway Group*. See also *Africa-Asia Confidential*, "Blood and Money in the Streets: China's Business Ties to the Loathed Camara Junta Could Quickly Backfire," October 20, 2009; Christopher Bodeen, "China-Guinea Deal Highlights Africa Business Ties," AP, October 24, 2009.

U.S. Relations and Policy Issues

U.S. officials have signaled approval of Konaté's leadership of the transitional government, and praised the June elections.⁸⁸ A week after the first-round vote, President Barack Obama released a written statement saying, "I extend my congratulations to the people of Guinea, who peacefully and successfully conducted an initial round of voting in the country's first free elections since becoming an independent state in 1958."⁸⁹ The U.S. Embassy affirmed that "despite time constraints and logistical problems, the government's engagement to peacefully hold historic elections in Guinea has contributed to Guinea's future political and economic future."⁹⁰ At the same time, some restrictions on U.S. assistance to Guinea and targeted visa restrictions imposed in October 2009 remain in place.

Potential issues for U.S. policy may include the following:

- Monitoring the transition to a civilian, elected government.
- The resumption, continuation, or further restriction of selected foreign assistance programs, including security assistance and medium- to long-term democratization and governance reform efforts.
- The maintenance or alteration of targeted travel restrictions against selected CNDD members and associates.
- Potential U.S. support for security sector reform (SSR).⁹¹

Foreign Aid

In response to the coup, the United States suspended bilateral assistance to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance. The United States also suspended most programs that required working directly with central government agencies; some exceptions were made for health and education projects.⁹² In practice, security assistance was suspended, while most non-military aid fit into permitted categories. However, while this policy broadly conformed to congressional directives, legal restrictions on bilateral assistance to post-coup governments were not triggered.⁹³ U.S. officials have indicated that elections must take

⁸⁸ State Department, Daily Press Briefing, January 5, 2010; and Eleventh Meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G), *Final Communiqué*, February 22, 2010.

⁸⁹ AFP, "Obama Calls for Peaceful Guinea Run-Off Vote," July 7, 2010.

⁹⁰ U.S. Embassy Conakry press statement, via Guineenews, July 8, 2010 (CRS translation from French).

⁹¹ For further analysis of the challenges related to SSR in Guinea, see CRS Report R41200, *Guinea's New Transitional Government: Emerging Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff.

⁹² Programs that involve working with district and municipal administrators who were elected in 2005 local elections were likewise exempted; the United States held that these elections, "though flawed, were Guinea's best-conducted elections ever." *FY2008 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

⁹³ The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) barred direct assistance "to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree," with the exception of democracy promotion assistance. Such provisions, which have been included in annual appropriations legislation since at least 1985, are often referred to as "Section 508" sanctions. However, the State Department determined that the December 2008 coup in Guinea did not trigger the provision because the deposed government had not been "duly elected." (State Department response to CRS query, March 2010.)

place in order for the aid suspension to be fully lifted. In some cases, funding for suspended assistance programs has been reprogrammed toward non-suspended activities.

A \$32 million USAID-funded umbrella project initiated in 2007, *Projet Faisons Ensemble*, has continued. Considered to be an innovative approach to development assistance in a fragile state, *Faisons Ensemble* aims to bolster governance at the local level to achieve better outcomes in health, education, agriculture, and other sectors. Components that involved working directly with national government counterparts have been discontinued, with the exception of education and health programs; funds for these components have been reprogrammed.

It seems likely that many of the same goals that defined U.S. aid priorities prior to the coup will continue to be pursued if a transfer to civilian, elected leadership is effected. In its FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, the Obama Administration stated that “assuming a credibly elected, civilian government is in place by FY2011, U.S. assistance will play a critical role in supporting the transition of this fragile country. U.S. assistance in FY2011 will focus on fostering more effective law enforcement and judicial systems, greater democracy, good governance, better health services, and improved economic opportunity.”

Elections and Democracy Promotion

The Obama Administration has stated that the primary U.S. objective is to assist “peaceful, democratic change” in Guinea.⁹⁴ Programs supporting Guinea’s electoral process are not affected by the suspension in U.S. aid. (U.S. democracy and governance programs in Guinea have been funded in recent years through the Development Assistance, or DA, account.) The Obama Administration’s FY2011 request for democracy and governance funding is for roughly \$5.53 million, and an estimated \$8.639 million was appropriated for democracy and governance programs in FY2010. U.S. support for Guinea’s electoral process will be largely implemented through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID programmed roughly \$5.53 million in FY2009 funds for electoral assistance programs, making the United States the second-largest donor to the election process after the EU.⁹⁵ U.S. officials have not publicly outlined what, if any, criteria might be required with respect to the continuation or suspension of electoral assistance or democracy and governance programs.

Security Assistance and Counter-Narcotics Cooperation

Security assistance programs were suspended in January 2009 in connection with the coup. Previously, U.S. security assistance officials had informally planned to provide counternarcotics assistance, maritime and air space security training and equipment, and military professionalization. Funds and programs slated to have supported these goals included International Counter-Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program (ACOTA), International Military Education and Training (IMET), a regional “Section 1206” program, and other funding sources.⁹⁶ While these

⁹⁴ FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.

⁹⁵ Information provided by USAID, March 2010. U.S. programs included training and technical assistance for Guinea’s National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), electoral agents and poll workers, and political parties and candidates; voter education; civil society and media election monitoring and oversight; and the provision of electoral materials.

⁹⁶ Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2006 provides the Secretary of (continued...)

plans reflected a desire to provide increased bilateral security assistance, attempts to implement the programs may have faced legal or policy barriers. Human rights concerns have periodically limited military training programs, and Congress has restricted IMET assistance in Guinea to “Expanded” IMET, which emphasizes human rights and civilian control of the military.⁹⁷ The Obama Administration has indicated that the United States will resume security assistance programs if the transition to an elected government is completed.⁹⁸

Despite the general suspension of security assistance in early 2009, limited new pre-electoral security assistance programs were initiated in the first half of 2010. In early June, the State Department initiated the training of a new, 75-member presidential security detail with \$1.5 million in Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds. The State Department is also supporting the presence in Conakry of a police reform advisor, and funded two experts’ participation in an assessment of Guinea’s security sector led by ECOWAS. The Department also intends to obligate up to \$200,000 in IMET funds for courses for military officials and civilians on topics including civil-military relations, military justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

Multilateral Aid

Development assistance and anti-poverty programs administered by multilateral organizations were affected by the coup. In 2009 the World Bank stopped disbursing roughly \$200 million in outstanding loans designated for programs related to health, transportation, education, and other sectors, due to political uncertainty following the coup as well as Guinea’s subsequent failure to make sufficient payments on its existing loans.⁹⁹ The International Monetary Fund-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was due to provide additional government financing in 2009, has not advanced since Conté’s death.¹⁰⁰

(...continued)

Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military and foreign maritime security forces. See CRS Report RS22855, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, by Nina M. Serafino.

⁹⁷ Most recently, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010, P.L. 111-117, Division F, Title VII, Section 7070.

⁹⁸ *FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

⁹⁹ Arieff interview with World Bank officials, May 2009 and February 2010. The World Bank classifies Guinea as one of the world’s 78 poorest countries, which qualifies Guinea for loans through the Bank’s International Development Association (IDA). IDA lends money (credits) on concessional terms, meaning that credits have no interest charge and repayments are stretched over 35 to 40 years, including a 10-year grace period. IDA also provides grants to countries at risk of debt distress.

¹⁰⁰ The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs. At the time of the coup, the program was on track. Reaching the HIPC “completion point” would grant Guinea an estimated relief of \$2.2 billion and reduce debt service by approximately \$100 million the first year (Arieff interview with IMF official, May 2009).

Appendix A. Profiles of Selected Guinean Political Party Leaders¹⁰¹

There are over 60 registered political parties in Guinea.¹⁰² These include a handful of longtime opposition parties as well as dozens of new parties formed after Conté's death. Many parties are generally perceived as having an ethno-regional base, and have little organizational capacity.

Cellou Dalein Diallo, Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, UFDG)

Diallo is the front-runner in Guinea's presidential election, having captured 39.7% of the first-round vote on June 27, 2010. Previously, Diallo served in government for 11 years under then-President Conté, holding several ministerial portfolios starting in the 1990s. He served as prime minister from late 2004 until mid-2006. He was appointed to head the UFDG in 2007, succeeding founder Mamadou Bâ (who had garnered over 24% of the vote in the 1998 presidential election). In January 2009, members of the military raided Diallo's Conakry home and accused him of hiding weapons and recruiting "mercenaries." The junta leadership later denounced the raid and claimed it was the work of rogue soldiers. As prime minister, Diallo oversaw local elections in December 2005, which were thought to be relatively free and fair (despite some flaws), but he has also been dogged by corruption allegations and the perception that he was too close to Conté. Diallo and the UFDG are seen as relying primarily on an ethno-regional base among Guinea's Peuhl (Fulbe) community of the northern Fouta Djallon region.

Alpha Condé, Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (Rally of the Guinean People, RPG)

Condé will challenge Diallo (above) for the presidency in a run-off vote, having garnered 20.7% of the first round. In his campaign, Condé has emphasized the fact that he was a consistent opponent of the Conté government and that he has never served in government. At the same time, he has been criticized for living overseas (mostly in France) during much of the past four decades. Condé's base is thought to be the Malinké ethnic group, concentrated in Guinea's northeast, though he is believed to draw some cross-ethnic support. A former exiled opponent of founding president Ahmed Sékou Touré, Condé challenged Lansana Conté in presidential elections in 1993 (Guinea's first multiparty election) and 1998. He received 19% and 16% of the vote, respectively, in these elections; both were marred by reports of irregularities and fraud. Following the 1998 election, Condé was arrested for trying to leave the country "illegally" and attempting to overthrow the government by force. He was sentenced to five years in prison in 2000, but released in 2001 on a presidential pardon. Condé and the RPG boycotted the 2002 legislative election and the 2003 presidential election.

Sidya Touré, Union des Forces Républicaines (Union of Republican Forces, UFR)

Touré came in third in the first round of the presidential election, capturing 15.6% of the vote, insufficient to proceed to the second round run-off. (He is challenging the results.) Touré served as prime minister from 1996 to 1999. Many Guineans credit him with initiating government

¹⁰¹ The following profiles are drawn from Arieff interviews, news reports, and International Crisis Group publications.

¹⁰² Available at <http://www.ceniguinee.org/index.php>.

reforms as head of a relatively technocratic government appointed by Conté amid a faltering economy. A member of the tiny Diakhanké ethnic group, Touré is believed to benefit from significant cross-ethnic appeal. His base is Conakry, both because he is from the coast and because his time as prime minister is remembered as a period in which government services in the capital, such as running water and electricity, noticeably improved. In 2004, Touré was accused of plotting a coup against Conté; many believe the charges were politically motivated.

Jean-Marie Doré, Union pour le Progrès de la Guinée (Union for Guinean Progress, UPG)

In January 2010 Doré was appointed Prime Minister of the government of national unity formed in accordance with the *Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou*. A longtime opponent of Conté and former close associate of founding President Sékou Touré, Doré ran for president in 1998 but took less than 2% of the vote. He was elected to the National Assembly in 2002. Following the December 2008 coup, Doré served as spokesman of the opposition “Forces Vives” coalition of political parties and civil society groups. Doré is a member of the Guerzé ethnic group and a Christian.

Lansana Kouyaté, Parti de l’Espoir pour le Développement National (Party for Hope and National Development, PEDN)

Kouyaté came in fourth in the June presidential vote, taking 7.9%. A career diplomat, Kouyaté was appointed to serve as a “consensus” prime minister in early 2007 amid attempts to end nationwide anti-government protests. Kouyaté’s appointment was initially met with widespread optimism, and he reportedly benefited from enormous popularity during his first months in office. However, despite some successes, such as an audit of government institutions and the renegotiation of international debt-relief agreements, his attempts to initiate sweeping institutional reforms stalled. In May 2008, Conté’s decision to sack Kouyaté via presidential decree met with little organized protest. Kouyaté left the country, but returned in early 2009 to launch his presidential campaign.

François Lonsény Fall, Front Uni pour la Démocratie et le Changement (United Front for Democracy and Change, FUDEC)

Fall captured less than one percent of the vote in the June presidential election; however, he is seen as an influential member of elite political circles, and a potential future cabinet official. A career diplomat and former Guinean representative to the United Nations, Fall served as foreign minister for two years and prime minister for two months in 2004. He was praised by some Guineans for choosing to resign as prime minister because, he said, he could no longer work with Conté. Fall remained abroad after his resignation and worked for the United Nations as the Secretary-General’s special envoy for Somalia, Burundi, and the Central African Republic. He returned to Guinea in March 2009 to launch his presidential campaign.

Appendix B. Touré and Conté Regimes: Historical Background

Ahmed Sékou Touré and the Guinean “Revolution” (1958-1984)

Alone among France’s African colonies, Guinea gained independence in 1958 after Guineans overwhelmingly voted for immediate sovereignty rather than membership in the self-governing but neocolonial French Community. Ahmed Sékou Touré, a trade unionist and militant anti-colonialist, spearheaded the movement for independence, which caused France to precipitously withdraw all aid and remove many physical assets, such as port equipment. After the break with France, Guinea’s fledgling government received significant technical and economic assistance from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. While adopting a radical anti-Western public stance, Guinea nevertheless also accepted aid from the United States which, seeking to counter Soviet influence, sponsored a Peace Corps program and provided other assistance. U.S. companies also maintained investments in Guinea, notably in the mining sector.

Touré’s Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG)—Guinea’s sole political party at the time—centralized control over all aspects of political, economic, and cultural life. The economic system and national educational program were ostensibly designed to eradicate all traces of Western colonial and neo-colonial influence. External travel for Guineans was restricted, while foreigners’ entry and movements within Guinean territory were strictly monitored. Touré allowed foreign multinational firms to form joint ventures with the government to mine and process Guinea’s large bauxite reserves through the use of industrial enclaves largely unlinked to the local economy. Nonetheless, enormous economic hardship was the norm for nearly all Guineans, especially after Touré attempted to ban all private trade in the mid-1970s. Broad opposition to such policies, which was catalyzed by the 1977 “Market Women’s Revolt,” led to an easing of economic control and other reforms during the late 1970s. After this point, Guinea turned increasingly toward the West for financial and technical aid.

Touré’s government was strongly nationalist and espoused a non-ethnic, unified Guinean identity. The Bureau Politique National, the country’s highest decision-making body, included members of each of Guinea’s major ethnic groupings. At the same time, members of the president’s extended family held key state positions and reportedly wielded significant power behind the scenes. Additionally, some government programs disproportionately affected certain regions. For example, the “demystification” campaign of the mid-1960, which sought to eradicate “backwards” cultural practices, mainly targeted the diverse ethnic groups of Guinea’s southeastern Forest region,¹⁰³ while in 1976 the regime specifically targeted members of the Fulbe (Peulh) ethnic group after Touré announced that he had discovered a Fulbe “plot” to destabilize the country. Overall, state-sponsored repression affected Guineans of all ethnicities, including members of Touré’s own Malinké ethnic group.

The first two decades of Touré’s presidency were marked by increasingly repressive practices as Touré claimed that France and other neo-colonial powers were engaged in a “permanent plot” to undermine the Guinean “Revolution.” The government regularly denounced various anti-

¹⁰³ The many ethnic groups who predominantly reside in the Forest region, of which the largest are Kissi, Guerzé (also known as Kpelle), and Toma (Loma), have acquired an ethno-regional identity, known in Guinea as *Forestier*.

government schemes purportedly led by counter-revolutionary Guineans and conducted regular purges of the civilian and military bureaucracies. The PDG also instilled a pervasive culture of surveillance and secrecy. A civilian militia was created for public security and to check the power of the military. Several thousand Guineans are believed to have disappeared in government detention under Touré, though precise figures are not available.¹⁰⁴ As many as a third of Guinea's population (some two million people) fled the country during the Touré era, though many left for predominantly economic, rather than explicitly political, reasons.¹⁰⁵ Many long-time observers suggest that Guineans, even those born after Touré's death in 1984, remain deeply influenced by the PDG regime, similar to the populations of post-socialist states in eastern Europe.¹⁰⁶

Guinea under Lansana Conté

Sékou Touré died during heart surgery in the United States in March 1984, leaving no clear successor and a government with little popular support. In early April, a military junta calling itself the Military Committee of National Recovery (*Conseil Militaire de Redressement National*, CMRN) took power in a bloodless coup. Colonel (later General) Lansana Conté, a senior officer and former member of the French colonial military, soon emerged as the leader of the CMRN.

The coup leaders suspended the constitution, disbanded Touré's ruling party (executing several of its formerly most powerful members), banned all political activity, and ruled by decree. However, the CMRN also relaxed the level of repression and initiated a few improvements in human rights, including shuttering the prison block at Camp Boiro, a notorious military base in Conakry that served as a detention center for Guineans accused by Touré of anti-government activities.

In July 1985, while attending a regional conference, Conté faced a coup attempt by a rival CMRN member, Diarra Traoré, an ethnic Malinké who had served as Vice President following the coup but who had later been demoted. The putsch was suppressed by pro-Conté troops. Purges of putative anti-Conté military elements, including military trials and executions of accused coup participants, followed, as did vigilante attacks on ordinary Malinkés and looting of their businesses. Such acts were publicly praised by Conté. These events were seen as lessening the influence of Malinkés within the military and state institutions, but they also highlighted ethnic divisions in Guinea and politicized ethnic identity among the President's fellow Soussou people.

¹⁰⁴ There has never been a comprehensive independent investigation into the PDG's detention practices. The Association of Camp Boiro Victims, a Conakry-based organization that seeks the rehabilitation of former detainees and the disappeared, believes as many as fifty thousand Guineans may have died in detention, though international researchers generally cite a lower number. Amnesty International estimated that 2,900 prisoners had disappeared in Guinea between 1958 and 1982 (Amnesty International, *Emprisonnement, 'Disparitions' et Assassinats Politiques en République Populaire et Révolutionnaire de Guinée*, Paris: Editions Francophones d'Amnesty International). One historian estimates 2,500 disappeared during Touré's presidency (Maligui Soumah, *Guinée de Sékou Touré à Lansana Conté*, Paris: L'Harmattan, p. 21).

¹⁰⁵ A. O. Bah et al., "Les Guinéens de l'Extérieur: Rentrer au pays?" *Politique Africaine* 36 (December 1989): 22.

¹⁰⁶ For example, the anthropologist and Guinea expert Mike McGovern has written that "remnants [of Touré's regime] persist in bureaucratic habits such as the strict surveillance of foreigners on Guinean territory... and citizens' habits such as that of looking to the State to solve all problems, in lowering for example the price of merchandise such as gasoline and rice, or further in omnipresent rhetoric... considering merchants as greedy saboteurs rather than as entrepreneurs "naturally" seeking to conserve their operating margins amid market fluctuations. A certain nostalgia for the Touré era is equally perceptible, even if that period was one of suffering and privations." "Sékou Touré Est Mort," *Politique Africaine* 107 (October 2007): 134-5.

As president, Conté steadily consolidated power. In seeking to resurrect the devastated economy, Conté pursued a pragmatic program of economic liberalization and reforms, including, for example, currency devaluation, a floating foreign exchange system, allowances for the creation of agricultural markets, and the privatization of state firms. Though Guinea remained somewhat economically isolated and strongly nationalist, Conté's reforms led to improvements in foreign relations and aid cooperation with donors. This included a moderate rise in U.S. assistance. In 2006, the government authorized Guinea's first private radio stations, making the country the last in West Africa to allow private broadcasting. The move ended a state radio monopoly in place since 1958, and was seen as complying with government agreements to relax regulation of political expression.

Tenuous Democratization

The ostensible need to ensure state security in the wake of the 1984 coup gave Conté latitude to extend his control over the state administrative and security apparatus. The president ruled by decree for nearly a decade. In December 1990, a new constitution, drafted by a transitional CMRN legislative body, was approved by popular referendum. Though it foresaw a five-year transition to elections, the constitution gave the president wide-ranging decision-making and governance powers. It also created the basis for a highly personalized regime based around the presidency, manned by officials drawn from across Guinea's ethnic groups but drawing heavily from the President's Soussou ethnicity. In 1991, Conté dissolved the CMRN, replacing it with a Transitional National Recovery Commission, which promulgated laws based on the constitution and was charged with overseeing a transition to electoral democracy.

In 1992, Conté legalized multi-party politics, but political activity was placed under strict state regulation. While donor countries, including the United States, provided technical assistance in support of this process, they did not extensively financially back the transformation or subsequent elections, due to apprehensions about limitations on popular participation under the system being created. Guinea's first presidential election, held in December 1993, was won by Conté, who garnered 52% of the vote. Conté won re-election in December 1998 and 2003. Guinea has held two multi-party legislative elections, in 1995 and in 2002. Conté's ruling Party of Unity and Progress (PUP) won both, taking 76 and 91 of the 114 seats in each respective election. Legislative elections were due to take place again in 2007, but were repeatedly delayed, leaving the National Assembly with an expired mandate.

Most of these elections were characterized by credible reports of irregularities and manipulation favorable to Conté and the PUP. Varying, though often extensive, levels of political unrest, election violence, state harassment and detention of opposition leaders, and coercive suppression of opposition political activities, were common threads. In 1998, the main opposition leader, Alpha Condé, was imprisoned following the vote. In 2001, a PUP-sponsored referendum aimed at extending Conté's time in office was passed by a putative 98% vote margin, amid low turnout and an opposition boycott, anti-referendum protests, a crackdown by security forces on opposition parties, and strong international criticism of the effort. It extended the presidential term from five to seven years and removed term and presidential candidate age limits, among other measures, extending Conté tenure.

In December 2003, Conté, who did not campaign because of his ill health, was re-elected with a reported 96.63% of the vote with only nominal opposition, following the Guinean Supreme Court's disqualification of six presidential candidates from the race on technical grounds and in the face of an election boycott by key opposition parties. The European Union reportedly refused

to support the conduct of the election or deploy election observers because of doubts over the transparency of the election.¹⁰⁷ In 2004, the Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH, in French) issued a report, titled “Guinea: A Virtual Democracy with an Uncertain Future,” that sharply criticized the government’s regular suppression of political freedoms and targeting of opposition groups.¹⁰⁸

Regional Instability

Starting in the late 1980s, each of Guinea’s neighbors experienced one or more internal conflicts—notably Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d’Ivoire. Conté’s government was an active participant in many of these conflicts, supporting various government and non-government actors in neighboring countries and reportedly serving as a conduit for arms. For example, Conté sent troops to neighboring Guinea-Bissau in 1998 to shore up his ally President Bernardo “Nino” Vieira amid a military uprising, while throughout Liberia’s successive conflicts (1989-2003), Conté provided backing for groups opposed to his regional nemesis, Charles Taylor.¹⁰⁹

In September 2000, Conté’s support for anti-Taylor rebels, along with ethnic tensions, played into a series of armed attacks along Guinea’s borders with Sierra Leone and Liberia. These attacks lasted several months, and terrorized residents of the southeastern Forest region in particular. A self-described Guinean rebel spokesman whose identity remains unknown claimed responsibility for the attacks and said they were aimed at forcing Conté to step down. Most observers believe the attacks were instigated by Liberia’s then-president, Charles Taylor, and carried out by members of Sierra Leone’s RUF rebel movement, Liberian militias, and some Guinean fighters. The Guinean military eventually quashed the assailants, using extensive aerial bombardment of villages suspected of harboring the rebels and the help of hastily formed village militias and Liberian rebel fighters opposed to Taylor.

Conté meanwhile presided over a weakening of central state structures. In its waning years, Conté’s government was reportedly divided into factions controlling different areas of the government, economy, military, and even nominal opposition and civil society groups. NGOs and international media portrayed a country whose leader was unable “to control the day-to-day operations of government.”¹¹⁰ Concerns over factionalization in the administration and military heightened with reports that President Conté, who declined to institutionalize his succession and who did not often appear in public, was terminally ill. Starting in 2003, the International Crisis Group warned that Guinea was at serious risk of a civil war or military coup.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ IFES, “Of Interest,” Election Profile (Guinea), at <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=402>.

¹⁰⁸ IRIN, “Guinea: Rights Group Slams ‘Caricature of Democracy,’” April 14, 2004. See also Maligui Soumah, *Guinée: La démocratie sans le peuple*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ In particular, Conté reportedly provided logistical support and a rear base on Guinean territory for the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) in the late 1990s, and later supported Liberians United For Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), a rebel faction that proved instrumental in unseating Taylor in 2003.

¹¹⁰ International Crisis Group, *Stopping Guinea’s Slide*, 2005: 10.

¹¹¹ International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d’une fin de règne*, 2003: i.

Relations with the Military

Although he arrived in power via a military coup, Conté had a complex relationship with Guinea's armed forces. The military benefited from significant socioeconomic privileges, but served as the target of purges and surveillance from a president who feared a military uprising. Conté faced many coup attempts, notably in 1996, when dissident officers shelled the presidential palace and briefly detained the president himself. The stand-off was reportedly diffused when the mutinous troops failed to agree on who should take over power upon Conté's dismissal. In 2005, an armed attack on the president's motorcade was followed by mass arrests.

The Conté era was also marked by repeated military mutinies spurred by demands for higher pay, more frequent promotions, and an end to the perceived monopolization of military patronage networks by a small handful of high-ranking officers. In response to these challenges, Conté cultivated the Presidential Guard (also known as the *Bataillon Autonome de Sécurité Présidentielle*, or BASP), an elite force based in Conakry and commanded directly by the presidency.¹¹² Conté also expended significant state resources on military salaries and benefits such as subsidized rice for Guinean troops. Numerous officers were forced to retire in late 2005 following the mass promotion of about 1,000 non-commissioned and commissioned officers. In 2007, the government more than doubled army salaries after soldiers rioted in dissatisfaction at their low salaries following their role in quelling nationwide strikes. These moves were generally seen as decreasing resources available to such public goods as education and infrastructure. The International Crisis Group noted that "pay increases, along with waves of recruitment in 2007-2008, ate into the state's fragile finances. But far from satisfying the troops, they generated an expectation that violent protests would bear fruit."¹¹³

Conté's administration generally refrained from enforcing military discipline in connection with alleged abuses of civilians, fostering what many Guineans and international observers see as a culture of impunity. In 2006, Human Rights Watch issued a report that Guinea's security forces routinely employed arbitrary arrest, torture, assault and occasionally murder to fight crime and perceived government opponents.¹¹⁴ An official commission of inquiry into security forces' killings of demonstrators in 2006 and 2007 had stagnated at the time of Conté's death in 2008. The last wave of protests in Conakry before Conté's death took place in November 2008; at least four people reportedly died when security forces opened fire with live ammunition.

Military Divisions and Restiveness

Conté, a former general, depended on the military to enforce his rule, and closely controlled the Ministry of Defense and other security agencies. Nevertheless, he faced several alleged putsches, some attributed to military officers. In 1996, a military mutiny spawned a coup attempt that reportedly nearly overthrew the president, and in 2005 the president's motorcade came under fire as he drove through Conakry. In addition, as his tenure waned, the military became increasingly

¹¹² Conté's personal guard also reportedly included a portion of the roughly 800 elite commandos known as the Rangers who were trained in border protection by a United States military cooperation program in 2001-2002 (International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d'une fin de règne*, 2003: 12; Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009).

¹¹³ International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The transition has only just begun*, March 2009: 4.

¹¹⁴ HRW, *The Perverse Side of Things: Torture, Inadequate Detention Conditions, and Excessive Use of Force by Guinean Security Forces*, April 22, 2006.

divided along ethnic and generational lines, and in recent years there were several military protests—some violent—mostly over pay, working conditions, and military rank promotions.

Particularly notable were a May 2008 junior officer uprising at Camp Alpha Yaya in Conakry and subsequent military crackdown on a police mutiny near the capital's downtown. The crackdown on police, in June 2008, was led by Claude "Coplan" Pivi, who had served as spokesman for the Camp Alpha Yaya mutineers and later played a key role in the CNDD coup. The confrontations reportedly left a rift in relations between the police and the army, and established Pivi's reputation as a well-known and much-feared figure in Conakry.¹¹⁵ Pivi's troops also reportedly laid siege to and looted police facilities throughout Conakry; the police counter-narcotics unit was ransacked and its records destroyed.¹¹⁶ These events reportedly allowed junior officers to gain control of substantial portions of state armaments and, given past incidents of violent military indiscipline, placed in question security conditions in Conakry.

Growing Pressure for Reform

Popular anger at Conté's regime grew in the later years of his regime. In mid-2006 and again in early 2007, a coalition of trade unions organized a series of general strikes in response to long-standing and widespread public dissatisfaction with economic stagnation, inflation of about 30%, the slow pace of promised political reform and democratization, and Conté's semi-autocratic presidential exercise of power. In January and February 2007, a general strike spiraled into unprecedented nationwide anti-government protests. These protests, which were supported by major political opposition parties and civil society groups, caused significant political unrest in urban centers. In response, the military opened fire on protesters and launched a harsh crackdown, particularly in urban centers and notably in Conakry, the capital. Confrontations between troops and largely unarmed demonstrators resulted in 186 civilian deaths, while hundreds were injured, beaten, or extra-judicially detained, and dozens tortured or raped, according to an investigation by local human rights groups.¹¹⁷ Martial law was imposed in February, during which time Human Rights Watch reported that security forces in Conakry "went house-to-house, breaking down doors, and looting everything of value inside, including cell phones, cameras, and money."¹¹⁸

In late February, the strikes were brought to an end in talks mediated by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The unions agreed to call off strikes in exchange for several concessions from Conté, including the appointment of a Prime Minister with some executive powers from a list of candidates pre-approved by unions and civil society groups. Conté's selection of Lansana Kouyaté, a former diplomat, was widely welcomed.

¹¹⁵ Many Conakry residents believe that Pivi possesses powers that make him bulletproof. Anxiety over Pivi's activities peaked in November, when Pivi reportedly ordered the arrest and torture of a group of Cameroonian nationals he suspected of having damaged his car. (*La Lance* newspaper, November 26, 2008).

¹¹⁶ *Aminata.com*, "Affrontements Entre Policiers Et Militaires—La Bande De Pivi Et Des Gardes Présidentielles," June 17, 2008; and Pascal Fletcher, "Bauxite-Exporter Guinea Faces Drugs Trade Threat-UN," Reuters, July 12, 2008.

¹¹⁷ Coalition pour la Défense des Victimes des Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les violations commises en République de Guinée pendant les événements de Janvier et Février 2007* (November 2007): 4. See also HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

¹¹⁸ HRW, "Guinea: Security Forces Abuse Population Under Martial Law" [press release], February 15, 2007.

Kouyaté managed a few significant successes, such as an audit of some government institutions and the renegotiation of a debt-relief agreement with the IMF. His attempts to initiate sweeping reforms of public institutions, however, stalled. Many attributed his failures to machinations by Conté's inner circle, Conté's refusal to accord to Kouyaté the power to make real changes, and public's disillusionment with the prime minister's perceived pursuit of his own political agenda.¹¹⁹ Quality of life across Guinea continued to decline, and a promised official probe into abuses by security forces during the strikes stagnated. The unions, which had enjoyed broad public support during the strikes, waned in influence due to Kouyaté's lackluster performance and rumors of internal splits and corruption among union leaders.¹²⁰ A presidential decree in May 2008 sacking Kouyaté and replacing him with a close Conté ally and businessman, Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, met with little protest.

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¹¹⁹ International Crisis Group, *Guinée: Garantir la poursuite des Réformes Démocratiques*, 2008; Kissy Agyeman, "President Replaces Consensus Prime Minister in Guinea," *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, May 21, 2008; and Michelle Engeler, "Guinea in 2008: The Unfinished Revolution," *Politique Africaine* 112 (December 2008).

¹²⁰ Arieff interviews, Conakry, February 2009.